

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 04279

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARY GENERAL

SUMMARY: RAMPHAL REPORTS THAT NKOMO HAS NOT RULED OUT
THE IDEA OF AN ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE SOMETIME IN THE
FUTURE. HE ALSO SAYS THAT GARBA WILL SHORTLY TOUR THE
FRONTLINE CAPITALS TO RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF A
SUMMIT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN NIGERIA. RAMPHAL
HAS VOLUNTEERED HIS ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING BOTH
MEETINGS. END SUMMARY.

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1. EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY
GENERAL SONNY RAMPHAL MARCH 15. RAMPHAL HAD SEEN
NKOMO THE DAY BEFORE. WHILE NKOMO HAD MADE MANY OF
THE SAME POINTS AS IN THE OWEN MEETINGS, HE ALSO
TOLD RAMPHAL HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET WITH THE
SALISBURY NATIONALISTS SOMETIME AFTER THE FORMATION
OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. IN MAKING THIS STATEMENT,

NKOMO DID NOT INSIST THAT SUCH A MEETING SHOULD BE EXCLUSIVELY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS.

2. RAMPHAL AGREED THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS ON RHODESIA. NKOMO, HE SAID, HAD EMPHASIZED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD UNDERSTOOD THE POSITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WHILE THE BRITISH HAD NOT. IN RENEWING EFFORTS TO ARRANGE TALKS, RAMPHAL SAID HE STOOD READY TO HELP. IF THE US OR BRITISH GOVERNMENTS FOUND IT AWKWARD TO RAISE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES WITH EITHER THE NATIONALISTS OR THE FRONTLINE, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO PLAY THAT ROLE.

3. RAMPHAL DID NOT SEE MUGABE AND FOUND MUGABE'S ELUSIVENESS IN LONDON PUZZLING. HE REFERRED TO REPORTS OF INTERNAL STRIFE IN ZANU AND SAID HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT MUGABE WAS "CONTROLLED" BY SOME OF THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM.

4. RAMPHAL ALSO RELATED HIS MARCH 14 CONVERSATION WITH NIGERIAN COMMISSIONER GARBA. GARBA SAID HE WOULD SHORTLY MAKE A TOUR OF THE FRONTLINE CAPITALS TO SOUND OUT THOSE LEADERS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A FRONTLINE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER DURING HIS VISIT TO NIGERIA. RAMPHAL STRONGLY ENDORSED THE IDEA OF A CONFIDENTIAL

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SUMMIT. GARBA IMPLIED THE AMERICANS HAD SHOWN SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT A SUMMIT BECAUSE THEY FELT "THE BRITISH SHOULD BE THERE AS WELL." EMBASSY OFFICER SPECULATED THAT THIS WAS UNLIKELY TO BE THE CASE BUT THAT NETO'S PRESENCE MIGHT BE A DIFFICULTY. AGAIN, RAMPHAL VOLUNTEERED TO HELP ENCOURAGE A SUMMIT IF THE PRESIDENT WERE ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA.

5. COMMENT: RAMPHAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN PLAYING AN ACTIVE AND CENTRAL ROLE IN THE RHODESIA CRISIS. HE HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH MOST OF THE PARTIES. (THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT, FOR EXAMPLE, PROVIDES LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT). WHILE WE NOW MAY NOT HAVE A SPECIFIC SUGGESTION FOR RAMPHAL, THERE MIGHT BE THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE COULD BE OF REAL ASSISTANCE FURTHER DOWN THE LINE, PARTICULARLY IF WE ARE SEEKING A "NEUTRAL" VEHICLE OUTSIDE THE UN CONTEXT THAT COULD HELP BRIDGE THE DIFFERENCES.

6. THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE SUGGESTIONS WE COULD PASS ON TO RAMPHAL, OR ALTERNATIVELY MIGHT CONSIDER A BRIEF MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS WILLINGNESS

TO BE HELPFUL. BREWSTER

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